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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Fifty-sixth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST PART (PUBLIC)* OF THE 1497th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 2 April 1996, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. AGUILAR

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ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (continued)

* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document CCPR/C/SR.1497/Add.1.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (continued)

Methods of work of the Committee under article 40 of the Covenant (continued)

Overdue reports (continued)

1. Mr. ANDO, speaking as Chairman/Rapporteur of the Working Group on article 40, said the consensus of the Committee at the previous meeting, had been to delete the last sentence in paragraph 7. The last sentence as amended would read, "After consideration of that report, a new date would be set by the Committee, for the preparation of the following report, taking into account the relevant circumstances of each case".

2. He proposed that the last part of the sentence in paragraph 8 be deleted, so that following the words "material difficulties", the sentence would read, "... the Committee may invite the State party to send its delegation for the purpose of discussing with the Committee how to overcome those difficulties".

3. With regard to paragraph 9, most members of the Committee preferred to set specific time limit for publicizing in the list of most seriously overdue reports.

4. Ms. EVATT proposed that five years be the time limit for publicizing the list of overdue reports.

5. The CHAIRMAN was not in favour of establishing a specific time limit and believed that the Committee should begin with States parties with two or more reports overdue.

6. Ms. MEDINA QUIROGA supported Ms. Evatt's proposal to set a five-year limit after which the fact that a report was overdue would be made public. In order to be fair to the State party, the Committee could notify States before making the information public.

7. Mr. BUERGENTHAL said that fixing a five-year limit would give the impression that any time up to five years was an acceptable delay. He would prefer the general phrase "a number of years".

8. He recalled the Committee had agreed to include in paragraph 8, Mr. Lallah's suggestion that the State party be requested to prepare an interim report on certain provisions of the Covenant.

9. The CHAIRMAN believed there could be no bona fide reason for any State to claim it had not been able to produce a 20-page report in five years' time and proposed to delete the words "bona fide" from paragraph 8.

10. Mr. ANDO, speaking as Chairman/Rapporteur of the Working Group on article 40, agreed to strike the words "bona fide" from paragraph 8. In order to incorporate Mr. Lallah's proposal, he suggested adding to the end of the last sentence the phrase, "or the Committee could request the State party to prepare an interim report on certain provisions of the Covenant".

11. In order to address the problem of the time limit in paragraph 9, he suggested they use "long overdue" so that the paragraph would read "the list of long-overdue reports to be publicized".

12. Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9, as amended, were adopted.

The first part (public) of the meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.